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President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte (Saint Lucia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 41 (continued)

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/333)

Ms. Kang Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to review the follow-up to the General Assembly's special session on children, which was held from 8 to 10 May last year. No issue is more relevant to the present and future well-being of our world than that of children. Indeed, "A world fit for children", as the outcome document of the special session is called, would be a world best fit for all. Progress towards the major goals identified in the document will be a major contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Republic of Korea is resolved to fully realizing those goals.

In the Republic of Korea the special session and the preparations leading up to it served to further consolidate the reorientation in policy-thinking on children. In the past, the focus had been on support for children in need. However, the revision of our child welfare act in 2000 marked a shift towards children's rights in general. The shift was further institutionalized with the formulation of the comprehensive plan for

child protection and rearing, which was published on 5 May 2002 — Children's Day — on the eve of the special session.

The comprehensive plan incorporates the elements of "A world fit for children" that are most pertinent to areas requiring further improvement in the Republic of Korea and is organized in a way that will most effectively build upon the achievements attained thus far. The plan covers 48 measures in five areas: enhancing children's rights; improving the health and welfare of children; strengthening children's safety; protecting children from harmful environments; and supporting the sound rearing of children. To oversee the implementation of the plan, the Committee for Child Protection and Rearing, which is composed of 13 vice-ministerial-level officials from the relevant ministries and offices, has been established to devise annual programmes for the implementation of the plan and to undertake regular reviews of achievements.

Among the 48 measures, of particular note for its cross-cutting implications for future policy-making is the development of the children's rights index. As called for in "A world fit for children" and further emphasized in the Bali Consensus — the outcome of the sixth East Asia and the Pacific Ministerial Consultation on Children — pertinent data is crucial to devising effective policies. My Government has therefore commissioned the Institute for Health and Social Affairs to develop a children's rights index. The existing system of data collection has lacked a unified categorization of age groups for children, and is

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therefore insufficient to cover all children and all areas under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The new index should lead to vast improvements in the collection of data pertaining to children. It will serve as the basis of a white paper on children's rights, to be published every five years, beginning in 2005.

Of the four major goal areas elaborated in "A world fit for children", I wish to focus on education, which was also identified in the Bali Consensus as an overarching imperative in fulfilling the commitments made with regard to children.

Education has always been given the highest priority in the Republic of Korea, and educated citizens have led the drive behind the country's economic development and democratic growth. The opportunities for children are already wide and still expanding. Currently, boys and girls are equally entitled to nine years of compulsory education. Most children advance to high school. There is little gender disparity in primary and secondary education. As of 2001, 67.6 per cent of girls and 73.1 per cent of boys advanced to college upon graduation from high school.

The Government's current focus is on achieving gender equality and eliminating gender discrimination in the content of education. A gender-equal curriculum for primary and secondary education has been worked out. Training programmes for teachers based on gender equality are also being strengthened. The Republic of Korea is fully committed to fostering gender equality in and through education, and will continue its efforts in that regard.

Furthermore, we believe that the empowerment of women is crucial in the promotion of the rights and well-being of children. Measures to empower women such as strengthened maternity protection and child care outside the home have a direct bearing on the healthy growth of children. The Ministry of Gender Equality, which was established in 2001, is therefore working closely with the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare and other relevant offices to devise policies that optimize the benefits to both women and children.

Another focus to improve the education sector is on children with disabilities. Measures in that area are an important part of the national programme for the promotion of the welfare of the disabled, which was established in 1998. Currently, the second phase of the programme, for the period 2003-2007, includes measures to provide quality education for disabled

children suitable for the knowledge-based information age, to expand model schools for inclusive education, to improve support centres for disabled children and to provide textbooks suited to the needs of children with visual impairments.

While promoting the goals of "A world fit for children" at home, the Republic of Korea has also been an active participant in regional and global initiatives on children. The Asia-Europe Meeting's (ASEM) Action on Child Welfare and the ASEM Initiative to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children are just some of the recent forums through which we have shared our experiences and policies with others on the pending issues related to children.

The official development aid programmes of the Republic of Korea have also incorporated projects for children in the East Asia and Pacific regions, including the construction of primary schools and hospitals, the promotion of children's health projects and the dispatch of medical specialists in paediatrics and obstetrics. We hope that those efforts will contribute to the enhancement of the well-being of children and to the achievement of the goals of "A world fit for children" in the region.

Finally, the Republic of Korea is fully behind the efforts made by the United Nations on behalf of children. In particular, we applaud UNICEF's dedication to helping the most vulnerable and needy children of the world, in collaboration with other United Nations bodies. We have supported its activities in the field with financial and material assistance. The successful outcome of the special session was in no small measure due to the dedication of UNICEF acting as its secretariat. Likewise, the successful implementation of "A world fit for children" calls for its continued active engagement in advocacy, humanitarian intervention and development assistance on behalf of children. In collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations and as a complement and support to the efforts of Member States, that engagement would provide the building blocks for the construction of a world fit for children.

Mr. Buffa (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the delegation of Peru on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group.

The Government of the Republic of Paraguay attaches priority to promoting and protecting the

fundamental rights of children and adolescents, particularly in conjunction with the set of objectives and targets agreed at the May 2002 special session of the General Assembly on children. The outcome document of the session, "A world fit for children" (resolution S-27/2, annex), reaffirmed the international community's commitment to implementing the remaining programmes and tasks of the 1990 World Summit for Children.

We should note that the special session was the first time that delegations comprised children and adolescents as official members, more than 400 of whom participated from more than 150 countries. The objectives and targets specifically established in four priority spheres of action — promoting a healthy life; access to quality education; the need to protect children and adolescents from maltreatment, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS — sought to strengthen and provide new impetus to countries' commitments to attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 through the definition of essential and concrete intermediate goals for 2010.

We should also seek to integrate international objectives into national Government plans and policies. In that connection, we have agreed to formulate or strengthen, by the end of 2003, national and regional plans of action designed for children with the participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and children and adolescents, whose opinions should be taken into account in all matters that affect them.

In that context, I wish to take this opportunity to announce that Paraguay recently drafted and adopted the national plan for children and adolescents, a five-year short-term plan for 2003 to 2008, consistent with the national childhood and adolescence policy formulated for a 10-year period, 2003 to 2013, which has greater and longer-term objectives aimed at comprehensive and substantive development of this majority sector of society, which represents approximately 47 per cent of Paraguay's population.

Since the World Summit for Children, important progress has been made in Paraguay with regard to the system for protecting and promoting the rights of children and adolescents. In that connection, the childhood and adolescence code is the chief regulatory framework protecting children's rights. It imposes a doctrine of comprehensive protection and incorporates

the principle of the best interests of the child, in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the same way, Paraguay has ratified the principal instruments of the inter-American and global systems for protecting and promoting children's rights, including very recently the second Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Likewise, the national secretariat of childhood and adolescence is promoting measures aimed at early ratification of International Labour Organization Convention 138, concerning the minimum age for admission to employment, which has already been endorsed by the Paraguayan Congress and is currently before the Chamber of Deputies.

In this field, there are favourable signs in Paraguay. On the one hand, decentralized efforts and mechanisms for protection, promotion and development of all children and adolescents have passed their experimental stage and are now being permanently financed and assessed. I am referring to the municipal childhood councils, which aim to protect children's best interests and to implement public policies at the local governmental level throughout the national territory with the central administration's decentralized agencies, civil society organizations and community organizations for children and adolescents. A concrete example of that is the commitment to implement a programme to provide a glass of milk to every child attending primary school. Currently, there is renewed effort in the central department responsible for that programme, whose outreach is expected to be 300,000 children.

However, much remains to be done. In that connection, we cannot fail to mention our great concern about the number of children and adolescents who still live on the streets in an urgent situation without access to a minimum education and who are subject to all kinds of abuses and excesses. We are also concerned about the high rates of school dropouts due to premature admission to employment and to the pregnancies of school-age girls.

In the area of education, I should like to reaffirm Paraguay's firm commitment to strengthening educational reform, which not only aspires to tailor the comprehensive training of children and adolescents to current needs and challenges, but also seeks to

optimize the educational system's scarce resources. Therefore, mindful that education and comprehensive training of children and adolescents are essential for development and the enjoyment of human dignity, the Government of Paraguay proposes to increase its social capital through innovative strategies that will reverse the perverse cycle of poverty.

Mr. Chaimongkol (Thailand): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on follow-up to the United Nations special session on children (A/58/333), held in May 2002. We are pleased to learn that one year has passed with a good start in the implementation of the Plan of Action contained in the outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children" (resolution S-27/2, annex), adopted at the special session. Thailand reaffirms its commitment to pursuing the four goal areas of the Plan of Action: promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

Thailand attaches high priority to protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence. The Thai Government has striven to prevent and suppress all forms of exploitation of children, particularly trafficking in children. Apart from strengthening legislative measures, the national policy and plan of action to prevent and suppress trafficking in women and children was adopted with an integrated and comprehensive approach to addressing the problem, particularly its root causes. Moreover, special attention has been devoted to girls' education. Education, both formal and non-formal, and vocational training have been provided to girls with a view to empowering them.

It is to be noted that a consistent spirit of partnership among governmental and non-governmental sectors, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, has been forged to ensure that every effort is made to promote and protect children in Thailand.

As international cooperation is required in the prevention and eradication of trafficking in children, Thailand has developed close cooperation with the United Nations system and the Governments of countries in the Greater Mekong subregion — namely Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar — to step up cooperation in combating trafficking in women and children in the

region. At a bilateral level, Thailand also concluded, in May 2003, an agreement with Cambodia on the suppression of trafficking in women and children and on assistance to trafficked victims.

As mentioned in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Thailand is pleased to facilitate conflict resolution by providing a venue for peace talks by the conflicting parties. We are particularly delighted that the recent peace talks in Thailand have resulted in the reaffirmation of the commitments undertaken by the parties concerned to refrain from using children under 18 years of age in combat and from recruiting those under 17.

My delegation wishes to underline the importance of the universal nature of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which now has 192 State parties. We also welcome the increasing number of countries that have acceded to its optional protocols. As a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1992, Thailand welcomes the enlargement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which will further strengthen the capacity of the Committee to fulfil more effectively its mandate.

In this connection, my delegation shares concerns about the increasingly heavy workload and the backlog problem faced by the Committee, which are currently affecting the Committee's effectiveness in addressing global concerns on children-related issues. We therefore wish to support the efforts of the Committee to improve its methods of work and its management in order to better deal with the challenges facing it. We should not forget that the effectiveness of the Committee is vital to achieving "A world fit for children".

Mr. Dhakal (Nepal): At the outset, I wish to join previous speakers in expressing my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/58/333) on the follow-up to the United Nations special session on children.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict for his analytical report on the protection of children affected by armed conflict (A/58/328).

Humanity is on a perennial quest for peace, prosperity and justice for all. Children must be at

centre stage of that quest, as they are the future of our societies. For them to become educated, healthy and productive citizens, they must have the right to proper education, adequate health facilities, and a conducive economic and social environment.

Today millions of children are victims of poverty, illiteracy, disease and armed conflict across the world. Eleven million children still die every year, mostly of preventable or curable diseases. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has been taking its toll on millions of innocent children as well. Atrocities and brutality against children continue unabated in conflict areas.

This, indeed, must change. We have a set of global blueprints for action in place. The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out broad parameters for a better environment for children. The Millennium Development Goals and the Declaration on "A world fit for children" identify steps to change the world for and with children in a time-bound manner. The Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation reinforce these and other goals.

We need to pool our resources and energies to implement those blueprints in order to protect the rights of children and to uplift their status in society. The multidimensional nature of children's problems requires that we make coherent and concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Nepal expresses its appreciation to the United Nations for its endeavours to build a common platform for action and to bring about much-needed coherence and cooperation.

The task before us is formidable. The goals of reducing poverty by half and of providing all children with primary education by the year 2015, as well as other global agreed goals, are laudable, appropriate and, indeed, ambitious. Business as usual will not get us where we want to go. We must muster greater political will in order to accomplish our task and redouble our efforts to achieve those goals.

Nepal is fully committed to protecting the rights of children and to promoting their development. We have become party to a number of international and regional human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138, on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, and No. 182, on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Nepal has already signed the two

Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have also submitted our combined second and third periodic reports, as stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To translate those commitments into improved status for children, Nepal has taken a number of legislative, policy and administrative measures. The 1990 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal guarantees the protection of the rights and interests of children and prohibits trafficking in human beings, slavery, serfdom or forced labour.

The Children's Act of 1992 spells out the rights of children in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and prescribes measures to safeguard them. The Child Labour — Prohibition and Control — Act of 1999 prohibits the employment of children under the age of 16. There are also several provisions in the civil code to protect the interests of children.

A strategic action plan has been formulated to address problems in seven key sectors, including child bonded labour; child rag pickers; child porters; child domestic workers; children in mines; children in the carpet sector; and trafficking in girls and sexual or labour exploitation. There is a special focus on promoting a healthy life; providing quality education; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

A master plan has been prepared to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2007 and all forms of child labour by 2010. The overriding objective of the current tenth five-year plan is to reduce poverty through interventions in the education, health, sanitation and rural development sectors. The plan aims to raise the literacy rate to 63 per cent and to increase school enrolment substantially. Free primary education for all, free textbooks for girl students at that level, as well as scholarships for Dalit and disadvantaged children, are some of the key features of our strategy that have been in the process of implementation in the education sector for some time now.

An integrated health service that provides primary health care, family planning services and immunization was introduced in our country some time ago. Immunization has reached more than 90 per cent of our country's children. Emphasis has been placed on providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Those programmes are integral to our efforts to alleviate poverty and improve overall condition of children. As part of our overall strategy, a comprehensive national plan of action on children is also being implemented, with the assistance of UNICEF and other United Nations agencies.

To implement those programmes, Nepal established a Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and other necessary institutional frameworks. The Human Rights Commission, the Women's Commission and juvenile benches in district courts have been set up to protect children's rights. A high-level central child-welfare board and district child-welfare boards have been set up in all 75 districts to promote the rights of the child and to mobilize local communities and resources to address problems faced by children at the district level.

His Majesty's Government has been working in close cooperation with all stakeholders at home and abroad to make possible the implementation of various development programmes aimed at children. It has sought the full participation of non-governmental organizations and the private sector in those activities.

At the regional level, we signed the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia at the Eleventh Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, which was held in Kathmandu in January 2002. The Conventions will complement global and national efforts to create a world fit for children.

Despite those efforts, poverty persists and children continue to suffer in Nepal. The Maoist insurgency has further worsened the situation. The Maoists have been disrupting much-needed development activities, destroying infrastructure and recruiting children as child soldiers. Nepal, a least developed country, needs peace to be able to implement the various programmes and activities aimed at the protection of children's rights and the promotion of development. The Government has been seeking to resolve the Maoist problem through dialogue, while at the same time taking measures to protect lives and property from Maoist brutalities and

to safeguard liberty and freedom from the insurgents' ambition to destroy democracy.

Nepal needs additional financial and technical cooperation from its development partners to implement various policies and programmes and to improve the situation of children. Assistance is also critical for quick-impact projects in the Maoist-affected areas to provide basic services to people. A recently published report, which was also presented at the Joint Executive Board meeting of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), showed that our resources and the present level of external assistance will be far from sufficient to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, as parents and elders it is our obligation to provide children with the basic necessities of life and with the opportunity for quality education, health services and a loving and caring environment. We must not allow the momentum generated by the various conferences on those topics to falter.

Mrs. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is clear that the rights of the child have been at centre stage since the holding of the World Summit for Children in 1990. Those rights are now a priority of Governments, civil society organizations, scientists and researchers who seek to foster the capabilities of children and meet their basic needs within a family providing safety, well-being, education, morals and ethics for a better future. Interest in the agenda for children has increased since the adoption and implementation of the Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children", which will contribute to the well-being of children and to strengthening their rights.

International cooperation has a very important role to play in that regard, especially in connection with providing support to developing countries as part of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and as a practical and positive approach aimed at overcoming obstacles and meeting agreed international financial commitments. There is, therefore, a need to enhance the implementation of the Plan of Action and to reinvigorate political will at the national and international levels.

If the present international situation continues, we shall see a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor in every country. Poor countries will therefore not be able to benefit from the positive aspects of globalization, which will then lead to further

marginalization of developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries. At the same time that those countries are experiencing the effects of malnutrition, malaria and HIV/AIDS — especially the ones located in Africa — they must also contend with the burden imposed by foreign debts and the servicing of those debts.

My delegation made a statement to the Third Committee concerning the national efforts Sudan is making with regard to protecting the rights of children and promoting their well-being. In this connection, we would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report (A/58/333) on the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children. We wish to underscore the contents of that report pertaining to the follow-up to major international conferences and other important summits that provided a comprehensive plan of action for development, whose primary objective is the elimination of poverty.

The report of the Secretary-General also referred to cooperation between the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa and UNICEF in drafting a comprehensive report on the situation of children in Africa. My delegation believes that that report should serve to raise awareness of the situation of children in Africa, given that they represent the most affected and vulnerable segment of the population by virtue of their exposure to such endemic diseases as malaria and HIV/AIDS and the fact that their mortality rate is extremely high owing to malnutrition and armed conflict. My delegation therefore believes that all factors affecting the lives, rights and prosperity of African children must be taken into account in the preparation of the report.

The report of the Secretary-General also addressed the issue of follow-up by some regional organizations. A comprehensive resolution in line with the outcome document of the General Assembly's special session on children and entitled "An Arab world fit for children" was adopted at the Arab Summit held in March 2002. The May 2002 meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) also adopted a resolution on child care and protection in the Islamic world. That resolution refers to the Plan of Action as a reference for action by OIC members.

My delegation would like for the Secretary-General's future reports on follow-up to include a comprehensive analytical review of the implementation

of the Plan of Action at the national, regional and international levels by focusing on the four primary goals with a view to defining problems and challenges and making practical recommendations. My delegation attaches special importance to the study being prepared by the Secretary-General on violence against children, in keeping with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly. My delegation hopes that it will be inclusive of all the fundamental causes that lead to violence against children, and in particular of the spread of poverty and disease. The report should also deal with the commercial and sexual exploitation of children through prostitution and their suffering under armed conflicts, abuse, killing and displacement, to which they are subject as a result of foreign occupation.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations specialized agencies, particularly the United Nations Children's Fund, aimed at achieving the well-being of children and enhancing their rights, while, at the same time, implementing the recommendations of the report, "A world fit for children", and supporting national efforts to follow up implementation of the plan of action of that document. We also appreciate all the relevant initiatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

Mr. Kovind (India): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (A/58/333). We have perused this report with interest.

We understand that the first in-depth report of the Secretary-General on this subject will be provided only in 2006. This is understandable, as progress, or the lack of it, can only be reviewed after sufficient time has been allowed for action to be taken. The General Assembly, nevertheless, in its resolution 57/190 requested a report this year with a view to identifying problems and constraints in achieving progress. Such a report can enable Member States to focus on areas in which reinforced commitment may be required.

The special session on children, held in 2001, had recognized that the resources promised at the 1990 World Summit for Children had, in fact, not been provided. The Plan of Action adopted by that session therefore devoted a separate chapter to the mobilization of resources. That was based on the realization that implementation would not be possible without

additional allocation of resources, both in the national and the international contexts. Developed countries undertook a number of commitments with regard to official development assistance, bilateral official debt and market access in the Plan of Action adopted by the special session.

The report of the Secretary-General does not refer to any specific constraints or problems that have been identified with regard to the commitments undertaken at the special session. The report contains a passing exhortation to all countries to follow up on the Monterrey Consensus to increase financing for development. There is, apart from this, no analysis of whether movement in the last year and a half has been in the right direction or not. Such an analysis could have helped us in our understanding of possible problems and constraints. There are a number of studies that establish the incremental growth acceleration that takes place with simple investments in the health, nutrition and education of infants and children. A study conducted in India has shown that one dollar invested in a child saves 27 dollars in future health care, medical treatment, subsidies and lack of economic contribution. It is very right, we believe, that poverty alleviation must begin with children. To invest in children is to invest in the future.

India has the largest child population in the world. We are aware of the gigantic dimension of that challenge. Our achievements, vis-à-vis all indicators for children over the past decade, have been positive. For example, the infant mortality rate declined from 146 per 1,000 live births in 1960 to 70 in 2000. The prevalence of severe and moderate degrees of malnutrition among children has steadily declined from 1974 to 2000. Primary school enrolment rates increased from 38 per cent in 1951 to 80 per cent in 2000. The availability of safe drinking water improved significantly, from 68 per cent in 1990 to 78 per cent in 2000. We realize that we still have a long road ahead, and we are committed to ensuring the rights, protection and complete development of every child in our country.

We are attempting to provide maximum outreach for our programmes for children. The integrated child development services, the largest child-care programme in the world, provide early child-care services to over 30 million children from 0 to 6 years from low-income groups. With the further scaling up of these services and a strong focus on newborn health

and survival, including through home-based neo-natal care by community workers and better health facilities, we hope to further improve the health status of our children.

The spectre of HIV/AIDS threatens the fabric of society, and children often become unwitting victims of tragedy. The national policy for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, announced by the Government of India last year, reaffirms our commitment to provide an enabling social environment to prevention, care, support and protection of victims and to provide information and health education.

The problems of persisting malnutrition and high infant and maternal mortality rates have been receiving our attention. We have launched a national nutrition mission that provides, inter alia, additional nutritional supplements to adolescent girls and expectant and nursing mothers. Our strategy to eradicate malnutrition will follow the intergenerational approach, while building community awareness about healthy nutrition and educating mothers regarding proper health and nutritional care of their families. With those measures and with continued emphasis on improving the quality of water and access to sanitation, we hope to make an appreciable dent in the problem.

Our Government launched a universal elementary education scheme three years ago. Through it, we intend to provide free and quality education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years by 2010, with special emphasis given to girls' education. This is a significant step toward achieving the goal of universalizing elementary education through a time-bound integrated approach. Our Department of Women and Child Development released a detailed statistical profile of Indian children last year. It contains a rich compilation of data for all the states in the country. The data have been disaggregated by gender and by the rural versus urban dimension. This is the beginning of the creation of a national and State database for children. Such a database would assist our policy makers and programme managers in devising more focused interventions and in guiding us towards the goals that we have established.

Ms. Kangaloo (Trinidad and Tobago): The delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/58/333 and entitled "Follow-up to the United Nations special session on

children". In his report, the Secretary-General has sought to identify the extent to which progress has been made by Governments in developing and/or strengthening national action plans for children as a critical first step towards the implementation of the commitments made 18 months ago at the special session.

In this regard, my delegation would like to inform the Assembly that Trinidad and Tobago's national plan of action is well advanced and is expected to be completed and approved by the Cabinet in 2004. This national plan of action, which is being drawn up after the holding of regional public consultations to incorporate the views of civil society and other organizations, will identify concrete strategies for the development of children.

In addition to the preparation of a national plan of action, other activities and policy initiatives have been initiated or are fully under way in several areas, all of which are aimed at according full respect for and protection of children's rights in Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago's broad policy with respect to children envisages, *inter alia*, the following: providing quality education at the primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary levels starting from early childhood, ensuring access to training with a view to promoting sustainable employment; promoting the protection of children's rights; fostering youth leadership and participation in community activities and national decision-making; and increasing awareness of health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Since the adoption of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children at the World Summit for Children, held in 1990, to which Trinidad and Tobago fully subscribes, and in the context of our subsequent adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, various civil society organizations in Trinidad and Tobago have been striving individually and collectively to formulate, introduce and implement measures in keeping with the aforementioned international policy instruments, to protect and develop the children of Trinidad and Tobago and to promote their best interests.

For its part, Government has provided a facilitative environment and has sought to foster collaboration at all levels of society to take into consideration the relevant input of all stakeholders.

Charged as I am with the portfolio of social services delivery in the Office of the Prime Minister, I wish to share with the international community some information on the activities that we have undertaken, aimed at reaffirming and promoting the rights of children.

Since 1997, we in Trinidad and Tobago have been annually observing Child Rights Week in the month of November, with the intention of disseminating information on the rights of the child to a wide cross-section of target groups such as Government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), teachers, parents, the general public and, most important of all, the children of Trinidad and Tobago.

We have also been engaged in regular and ongoing sensitization and education programmes aimed at various publics. Information packages have been distributed to schools and to community-based organizations throughout Trinidad and Tobago, containing, among other things, a summary of the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Essay writing on this issue, community meetings and television and radio appearances have all focused on discussions on the rights and responsibilities of the child. Articles relating to proper parenting and child rearing are featured on a weekly basis in the print media with national circulation.

In July of this year, Trinidad and Tobago submitted its second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with the Convention and taking fully into account the Committee's concluding observations of its consideration of Trinidad and Tobago's initial report of October 1997.

In November of last year, as part of my Government's annual observance of Poverty Eradication Week, focus was placed on children in recognition of the destructive impact that poverty has on their daily lives as well as on their future. The exploration of the theme "Breaking the cycle of poverty through early childhood care, nutrition and the environment" enabled the national community to understand what we — as adults, as a Government, as civil society and as a community — need to do to ensure that we break the cycle of poverty as it affects children in particular.

To conclude, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago continues to work towards

achieving the four major goals identified in the Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" (resolution S-27/2, annex). This year's national budget for the fiscal year ending in September 2004 allocates the highest percentage of resources to the health and education sectors and, in the area of combating HIV/AIDS, the Government will, starting in fiscal year 2003 and continuing for the next five years, spend approximately \$80 million on all aspects of the campaign against HIV/AIDS, which will target, among others, HIV-positive children. The Government will also be expanding access to antiretroviral therapy by establishing treatment centres throughout the country and by extending the coverage of our programme for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

In the area of providing quality education and in keeping with the Government's holistic approach to education, a plan to achieve universal pre-school education before the end of this decade has been developed.

As regards protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence, my Government will be establishing no later than 2004 a fully functional children's authority for championing the rights of children.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to ensuring the protection and well-being of our nation's children, and we will do our utmost to ensure that our children not only survive but blossom into healthy, wholesome young adults capable of playing a meaningful role in the ongoing development of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 41.

Agenda item 46

Towards global partnerships

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/227)

Mr. Stachelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland fully subscribes to the principle of States' primary responsibilities to eradicate poverty, to respect all human rights, to protect the environment and to promote social and sustainable development. There is, in fact, little doubt regarding the central role of States,

particularly in drafting national and international policy. However, in the current climate of economic and social globalization, there is even less doubt that the requirements for global governance extend beyond the sphere of Governments' jurisdiction and authority.

A solid consensus on the current state of affairs is increasing among a growing number of countries in the North as well as in the South. In this regard, many recent initiatives support the need to develop and affirm a new culture of collaboration, relying on all of society's available resources.

In 2001, this Assembly unanimously recognized for the first time, by its resolution 56/76, the soundness of global partnerships. It reminded us that action taken to meet the challenges of globalization could only benefit from a strengthening of the cooperation between the United Nations and all concerned partners, in particular the private sector, so that globalization could become a force that is beneficial for all.

Despite this encouraging development, what was once the millennium consensus is now waning, to the point of being called into question. Switzerland is convinced that partnerships are one useful tool for maintaining this process, or even of re-energizing it.

This commitment was notably manifested at the major conferences — from Monterrey to Cancún, by way of Johannesburg — even though their outcomes did not necessarily meet expectations. Without bringing these results into question, we must persevere; our hope is based on the fact that the many partnerships developed at these intergovernmental meetings often produce tangible and promising results in the future.

Drafted two years ago, the Secretary-General's first report on "Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector" (A/56/323) is now the document of reference. It presented existing forms of cooperation between the United Nations and the private sector, identified outstanding issues and proposed recommendations in that regard. Switzerland supported those pertinent recommendations then and continues to do so.

Action was taken on the report's recommendations, as shown by the latest report on the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners (A/58/227). Moreover, we thank the Secretary-General for this excellent

document, which presents an exhaustive overview of recent developments. It highlights, in particular, that all partnerships initiated within the United Nations context must respect a certain number of simple and effective rules: first, they must fully preserve the integrity, impartiality, and independence of the United Nations; secondly, they must function in as transparent a manner as possible; finally, they must contribute to the achievement of the Organization's goals.

In our view, these rules are essential, and in this regard we have taken a great interest in the review currently under way of the guidelines governing the Organization's relations with the private sector. We hope that this review will be completed as early as possible.

The report also highlights the fact that, today more than ever, we need a new culture of cooperation. In this regard, Switzerland is particularly interested in the development of policy dialogues with the private sector, as well as in efforts to promote United Nations objectives and sensitize non-State actors to them.

In the same spirit, Switzerland supports with conviction the Global Compact launched by the Secretary-General. In three years, this innovative initiative has proven that it is possible to bring together businesses, the United Nations and its agencies, civil society, and Governments in the search for common and freely agreed solutions. Of course, a watchful and constructive eye must be trained upon the subscribing activities and businesses, in order to ensure that the initiative is not reduced merely to public relations. The founding principles of the Global Compact must therefore remain the transparency and responsibility of all actors involved. At the same time, however, the Global Compact is in itself an experiment, requiring flexibility and sufficient political space to manoeuvre to maximum effectiveness.

It could be said that the Global Compact has reached the end of its experimental phase, and is now maturing into its operational phase. Institutional developments, improved transparency, and the permanent debate revolving around the initiative give us confidence for its future.

Mr. Stanislavov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The implementation of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration by the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development requires

joint efforts and enhanced partnership cooperation among States, international organizations, the private sector and other segments of civil society. The experience of recent years has confirmed that the main focus of the efforts of these partners should be the fight against poverty and assistance to economic growth and sustainable development. The United Nations has shown itself to be the most appropriate platform for developing such partnerships, enabling flexible coordination of the work of their stakeholders, the balance of their interests, transparency, accountability and conformity with United Nations objectives.

General Assembly resolutions 55/215 and 56/76, "Towards global partnerships", co-sponsored by Russia, set out the proper parameters for interaction between the United Nations and non-State entities, particularly enterprises, foundations and other actors of the private sector. Further broadening the business relations of the Organization with the private sector deserves all possible support and encouragement. That is the imperative of our times. The globalization of the world economy has made business one of the leading factors of development and one of the most important participants in global economic ties. More than that, it is obvious that the prospect of full achievement of the Monterrey and Johannesburg targets depends on the productive participation of the private sector and other partners.

On the whole, Russia is satisfied with United Nations efforts to establish multilateral partnerships. As one of the most successful examples of such efforts, we would like to mention the useful work of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force. In this area, we particularly take note of the achievements resulting from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the important catalytic role played by the Commission on Sustainable Development. We believe that there is a need to make more active use here of the Monterrey track as well. On the whole, the United Nations system needs to expand the practice of partnerships, especially in the area of development assistance. It is also important that partners have an opportunity to exchange experience with each other.

From the outset, Russia has supported the initiative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the Global Compact, aimed at the active cooperation of the business community with the United Nations with a view to creating a global economy with a human face.

It is no secret that in certain places there are still apprehensions that the involvement of the business sector in cooperative work with the United Nations in the area of development might undermine the entire governmental basis of such cooperation. We do not share such apprehensions, and in our view the developments of recent years in fact convincingly confirm this rationale.

The experience of the United Nations allows us to draw some conclusions. We share the view of the Secretary-General, stated in his report under this agenda item (A/58/227), that there is no single model for successful partnerships and that partnerships are flexible in nature. However, it is obvious that any innovations in the strategic framework and in the practical implementation of partnerships must in the final analysis both meet the interests of the Governments of Member States and work to strengthen the authority and preserve the independence of the Organization. We expect that that basic approach will be fully taken into account when carrying out the updating of the United Nations business guidelines promised in the Secretary-General's report.

Russia is interested in developing cooperation between the United Nations and the Russian business community, particularly through the Global Compact. The idea of the Compact has become increasingly well known in Russia as a result of a successful round table on Russian business and the United Nations, held at the end of 2001 in Moscow. Currently, 11 leading Russian companies have adhered to the Global Compact, and a national coordination committee for the Global Compact, made up of representatives from private companies and corporations, has been established. The positive trends in the Russian economy and the attendant increase in foreign investment activity are, in our view, creating additional opportunities for the wider dissemination of the principles of corporate governance and international standards of management, accounting, auditing and environmentally sound production advanced by the Global Compact.

Mr. Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me express first and foremost our deep appreciation for the President's active and engaged stewardship of the work of the General Assembly. I should also like to take this opportunity to register our appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the timely reports prepared for this

year's session, including that on agenda item 46, "Towards global partnerships".

Recent developments at major United Nations conferences, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as the increasing engagement of the United Nations in partnerships — examples of which have been elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General — should indicate the importance of this subject to all of us in the Assembly, whether from developing or developed countries. Since we have had the opportunity in the past to present our general views on various aspects of global partnerships, I do not intend to repeat those positions and analyses, which are fully known to the Assembly. Instead, I wish to emphasize some elements and aspects which we consider to be prominent and urgent for our prospective work.

I should stress here that my Government attaches, as a matter of principle, great importance to the role and participation of stakeholders, including the private sector, in activities contributing to the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations. Based on this overall premise, we are well disposed and fully prepared to engage in a proactive and constructive dialogue with all interested negotiating partners on all aspects of this important subject.

We are of the firm view that partnerships, in all their aspects and at the national and global levels alike, should be conducive to development and the elimination of poverty. This cannot be overemphasized. What is at issue, therefore, is the role that the international community should play in this context. The question of building partnerships finds its place within this overall framework. Put in very practical terms, the question for us is how to strengthen the development role of the United Nations system, how to enhance the effectiveness of its development activities and its support for national development strategies and programmes by implementing various initiatives, including partnerships with all relevant partners and the private sector in particular. Needless to say, these initiatives should be thoroughly reviewed, discussed and refined by Member States.

In a world somewhat fixated on market economics and corporate profitability, legislation and intergovernmental agreements should remain important components of any strategy to promote corporate

responsibility and accountability. New initiatives in general, and partnerships in particular, should not lead to a further weakening of the regulatory role of the State and intergovernmental bodies. It is necessary to reiterate the importance of the State in providing for the general welfare of its citizens. We should recognize that fact and not undermine or diminish the role of the State. It is the State that is in charge of development, and not the market or corporations, as they have totally different agendas.

The cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners should primarily aim at making a contribution to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization. Relevant partners, particularly the private sector, should contribute to the realization of the development goals of the Organization through the provision of financial resources, transfer of technology, management expertise, in-kind donations, responsible investments, and reductions in the price of drugs used to treat pandemic diseases. We hope in particular that the transnational corporations, which have great influence in the global economy, will join efforts to realize the development goals of the United Nations and take concrete measures to help developing countries in their efforts to promote development.

In our view, it is imperative that the United Nations and its related bodies should focus their work on issues central to the transfer of knowledge and technology and to the building of the necessary domestic capacities, with a view to promoting the competitiveness of the developing countries. We are very much concerned that the resources available to the United Nations system to assist developing countries in meeting the challenges they face in designing the policies and strategies required to bridge the technology gap between the North and the South are simply inadequate. In this context, the resources that the partners can contribute within the framework of partnership, in terms of expertise, funding and technology, should be a complement to, not a substitute for, governmental resources.

We take the view that in the context of cooperation with the relevant partners, the United Nations needs to follow a differentiated approach, in line with the characteristics of the partners as well as the fundamental purpose of contributing to the implementation of the development goals and programmes of the Organization.

With that in mind, and taking into account the lessons learned from successful partnerships, and also with due regard for the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions on global partnerships, my country stands ready to contribute to collective intergovernmental endeavours to meet the challenges ahead, with a view to the further evolution of a common vision and the elaboration of realistic approaches to promoting partnerships among all stakeholders.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me express, on behalf of the European Union, our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on "Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector". The report is a useful update on the progress made and challenges encountered since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, which recognized the relevance of the participation of the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society to the collective achievement of the Organization's purposes.

The United Nations and the private sector have developed valuable and diverse initiatives. There are many forms of partnerships, ranging from time-bound project partnerships involving a small number of entities, to global initiatives involving various actors. The European Union is very pleased to acknowledge that today partnerships are an integral part of the work of many United Nations organizations, including funds and programmes, particularly those who have on-the-ground capacities to deliver.

The European Union has always considered partnerships to be important steps in the context of international cooperation for sustainable development. We believe that partnerships are supportive of, and complementary to, the intergovernmental processes and procedures of the United Nations and policy-making at the national level. The development process is an increasingly demanding task — all the more so given our growing awareness of our developing partners'

needs and priorities. To achieve the ambitious goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, we must seek new solutions and methods of work. This will be possible only with the active participation of all stakeholders in the development process — governmental and non-governmental alike.

The European Union takes a positive view of the various initiatives undertaken after the launching of the debate on global partnerships. There has been a flourishing of partnership initiatives, the best known of which are outlined in the Secretary-General's report. The International Conference on Financing for Development has further encouraged the establishment of partnerships. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 200 partnerships were announced. Partnerships are playing an important supportive role in carrying out the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as recognized at the most recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force is another valuable example of public-private-civil-society partnerships that make information and communication technologies available to all the world's citizens, in fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. We look forward to the next World Summit on the Information Society, as it will provide a unique opportunity to develop partnerships in this key sector. Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the activities of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and to express our gratitude to the private companies and individuals that have contributed to the implementation of so many projects worldwide.

Global partnerships are not for multinational corporations alone. Experience to date has shown that both industrialized and developing countries are paying attention to the private sector. We would like the United Nations to expand its partnerships to include more initiatives by developing countries, if necessary through capacity-building projects.

The evolving debate on global corporate citizenship shows great vitality. Concepts such as accountability, transparency and corporate social responsibility should be taken into account and underlined. Governments have an important role in promoting this debate at the national and international levels. They also have an important role to play in

encouraging responsible global corporate citizenship, which should lead more companies to embrace the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines for multinationals and the Global Compact, and to become involved in partnerships in support of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The United Nations Global Compact, launched by the Secretary-General in July 2000, is receiving tremendous support from the international community. The private sector has also come to recognize the need to balance financial and economic imperatives with broader societal concerns. The Global Compact contains a vision for good conduct based on nine principles, which more than 1,200 companies have now made part of their corporate strategy.

The European Union supports the work done by the Global Compact to integrate its principles into business activities through a range of initiatives, including dialogue, learning, outreach and projects. We believe that the Global Compact contributes positively to the achievement of development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary-General's report reflects the fact that partnerships are a very new phenomenon for the United Nations. They entail experimentation, as we are learning by doing. The United Nations can be instrumental in creating a favourable environment for the evolution of partnerships. The United Nations, together with main stakeholders like the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, has, therefore, a particular role to play in further encouraging and enhancing the use of the instrument of partnerships in order to achieve the goals of the Organization.

The European Union understands concerns that the pursuit of profit and the promotion of private or individual advantage might take precedence over the public good. Partnerships must not compromise the independence of the United Nations or prevent it from defending the general interest and acting accordingly. The Secretariat has the responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the system, and we welcome the steps taken in that respect. At the same time, we believe that the growing partnership activities will require special training within the United Nations system to enhance the Organization's ability to manage them.

The European Union will introduce a draft resolution in the General Assembly that will reflect the positive developments in the global partnership activities of the United Nations, which we have outlined in this statement. We intend to build on the considerable support we received two years ago, and look forward to working with all interested delegations.

Ms. Jan (Pakistan): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/58/227, on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector.

Our deliberation on this agenda item is rooted in the Millennium Declaration, which called for the development of strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.

The International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the commitment made at the Millennium Summit to forge a global partnership to address the complex and multidimensional challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

The history of United Nations partnership with non-State actors dates back to 1946, when the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council was first established. Today, thousands of non-governmental and civil society organizations are working with the United Nations for the attainment of their shared objectives. With the help of those partners, United Nations agencies have achieved some major successes, especially in the areas of health, nutrition, poverty eradication and development.

In today's globalizing world, it is becoming increasingly evident that if we want globalization to work for all, as envisioned by our leadership in the Millennium Declaration, the economic, financial and social challenges confronting humankind will have to be addressed in a coherent and collective manner by all stakeholders. That will require greater cooperation between Member Governments of the United Nations and other non-State actors, such as the Bretton Wood institutions, civil society and the private sector, and the development of greater harmony in their shared endeavours to promote development. Based on that premise, Pakistan welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and other stakeholders and

acknowledges the positive role such partnerships can play in facilitating the flow of financial resources and technical know-how, including research and development, capacity-building and the sharing of experiences in various realms of development.

We believe that today's complex challenges can only be addressed through a collaborative and coherent approach involving the Member Governments of the United Nations, institutional stakeholders, the private sector and civil society. It was in that context that the Millennium Declaration resolved to provide greater opportunities for the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society to meaningfully contribute to the realization of the objectives and goals of the United Nations, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.

We also recognize the pivotal role that the private sector can play in achieving the development objectives of the major United Nations summits and conferences, particularly in the areas of trade, debt, investment, technology and industrial cooperation. Similarly, they can also make a positive contribution in the operational activities of the United Nations, especially as regards disadvantaged groups and the poorest segments of society.

In that regard, we are pleased to learn from the Secretary-General's report that a number of partnership initiatives between the United Nations and non-State actors are contributing immensely to the realization of the Organization's development goals. We appreciate the effort of United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to promote successful partnership with NGOs, civil society and other non-State actors. In that connection, we welcome the creation of a United Nations Partnerships Office in accordance with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

We agree with the Secretary-General that partnerships are a tool to complement the Organization's efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the United Nations. We also agree that, given the diversity of the areas in which the United Nations system works with its development partners, to evolve a uniform modality of interaction and rules of engagement is not possible. However, it is also not possible to work with non-State actors without defining the scope and limits of such cooperation. It is therefore important that partnership arrangements between the

United Nations system and the private sector should be based on clearly defined definitions, principles and criteria.

The principles and approaches for such partnerships should be built on the firm foundation of the purposes and principles set out in the Charter. The guidelines so prepared should clearly stipulate delineation of responsibilities and roles, accountability, transparency and commitment to maintaining the independence, integrity and impartiality of the United Nations. Furthermore, they should aim at serving the goals and purposes of the United Nations system and should respect the sovereignty and supremacy of States. In that regard, the set of principles for partnership arrangements prepared by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session could be used as a guideline by other entities of the United Nations system for preparing their own guidelines, taking into account their specific requirements.

Pakistan appreciates the role of non-State actors in the realization of the objectives of the United Nations and considers that those entities can play a vital role in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. They can also support developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty, by providing financial resources, technical expertise and transfer of technologies. However, it is important to ensure that the entities involved in partnership arrangements with the United Nations abide by the rules of procedure set by the Organization and assume corporate responsibility and accountability.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on partnerships (A/58/227). It contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the state of cooperation between the United Nations and its partners in various areas over the past two years. The reach of economic globalization has broadened and deepened over recent years, but the gap between North and South continues to widen, and the disparity in development among countries has become more pronounced. At the same time, we are witnessing a considerable role being played in globalization by the private sector, particularly the massive transnational corporations.

In order to turn globalization into a positive force that benefits all and to promote common and balanced

development of countries in the process of globalization, each of the relevant partners, especially the private sector, should make its unique contribution by giving full play to its own advantages in financing and technology. In that context, we support the United Nations strengthening its cooperation with the relevant partners in order to encourage them to take part in activities aimed at attaining the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields.

We have observed that the United Nations and its relevant partners have engaged in diverse forms of cooperation over the past two years. Many private sector and non-governmental organizations and civil society actors actively participated in the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and in carrying out specific projects in the field of development, playing a positive role towards achieving the goal of poverty eradication and other Millennium Development Goals. We appreciate their efforts in that regard.

At the same time, with a view to achieving better cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners that takes full advantage of the strengths of those partners and optimizes their contribution to the work of the Organization, I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, cooperation with relevant partners should conform to the purposes and the principles of the Charter and to the rules and procedures of the United Nations, without detriment to the intergovernmental nature of the Organization. That is the basis for United Nations cooperation with its partners.

Secondly, partnerships should complement, but not be a substitute for, intergovernmental cooperation, and their overriding priority should be to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the outcomes of major United Nations conferences. At the same time, partnerships should be action-oriented. We agree with the observation of the Secretary-General in his report that "partnerships must prove their worth in a practical manner by the achievement of concrete results" (A/58/227, para. 66).

Thirdly, the Secretary-General also points out that "[there] is no single model for successful partnerships" (para. 64). We fully agree with him on that point and

believe that the United Nations should adopt diverse and flexible forms of cooperation with relevant partners, in keeping with the characteristics of those partners and the areas and levels of cooperation, and that this cooperation should contribute to achieving objectives.

Fourthly, partnerships need to be guided and regulated in order to ensure their quality. We support the proposal made by the Secretary-General in his report "to create more robust processes for partnership-reporting and accountability" (*para* 92). At the same time, we believe that the comprehensive and detailed guidelines and criteria on partnerships in the field of sustainable development formulated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session could serve as guidance for other partnerships within the United Nations system in the field of development.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/58/227). It is clear from the report that the United Nations has been active in building partnerships to achieve the goal of the eradication of poverty and other programmes of the Organization. Numerous examples of partnership projects have been undertaken, including on improving education, eliminating child labour, promoting youth issues, human rights, information technology and sustainable development. All of these contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments made at other major United Nations summits and conferences.

These partnerships are of particular importance to developing countries, which have tremendous problems mobilizing financial, technical and human resources to implement development and poverty eradication programmes. Partners, especially from the private sector, can come in to complement the efforts of Governments.

My own country, Uganda, has benefited in the specific areas of investment guidance and capacity-building, as well as in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Partnerships can help us, as a least developed country, in the area of infrastructure development and maintenance. We also need continued assistance in our joint effort to combat all forms of terrorism in our region.

We agree that such partnerships should in no way be a substitute for States' responsibility to be the lead

participants in their own development and in the fight for poverty eradication. It should also not be a substitute for the international community meeting its commitment to help developing countries eradicate poverty and achieve other agreed targets necessary for development.

We note that the cooperation between the United Nations and relevant non-State actors, especially the private sector, is necessary and mutually beneficial and has gained momentum in the recent past. We agree with the view that such partnerships should continue to serve the purposes and the principles of this, the most universal intergovernmental Organization, and should not compromise its intergovernmental decision-making nature.

Lastly, in its quest to deliver programmes to Member States, the United Nations should continue to assess the benefits and the risks associated with partnerships with non-State actors and to strengthen the guidelines for such cooperation.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 46.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 50

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/359)

Mr. Benmellouk (Morocco) (spoke in French): I should like to make the following comments on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The question before us today is indeed important, if not critical, given that the strengthening of multilateralism and the viability of international action for development depends, to a great extent, on the international community's capacity to translate into reality the commitments it undertook in the area of economic and social development at the various conferences and summits held during the past few years under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Group of 77 and China would recall that the commendable — and considerable — efforts of the international community have made it possible to achieve results dealing with the problem of development in all of its aspects that are accepted by all.

Indeed, with the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as those emanating from the major conferences — in particular those held at Copenhagen, Monterrey and Johannesburg — the international community today has at its disposal a clear road map to guide our actions and channel our efforts towards the achievement of conditions conducive to sustainable and harmonious development, the equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization, and a peaceful world reconciled with itself.

However, the achievement of such a far-reaching yet viable objective requires unswerving efforts to fulfil the commitments to which I have just referred, taking into account the specific particularities of each process. It is within that framework that the Group of 77 and China launched the initiative for the establishment of an ad hoc working group to consider ways and means of ensuring the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcome of the major conferences and summit meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres.

Today, in the context of the adoption of resolution 57/270 B, we welcome the outcome of the Group's work, in particular since the decision to convene, in 2005, a summit devoted to development and to involve the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the annual meeting of the Economic and Social Council on financing for development represent, *inter alia*, considerable advances in the area of development.

Moreover, the broad consensus that emerged from the work of that working group is likely to strengthen the conviction of the international community as a whole regarding the vital need to revitalize the spirit of multilateralism and shared responsibility, given the irreversible process of globalization and the interdependence of economies.

In that context, the Group of 77 and China believes that, at a time when the developing countries are continuing to make tremendous efforts towards economic and social reform despite various and

overwhelming constraints, it devolves on developed countries to accompany those efforts by fulfilling their commitments in the area of development.

Indeed, based on the principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility, which must guide the international community in its efforts to work for the welfare of all, the developed countries are more than ever before called on fully to contribute to those efforts through a variety of measures. Such measures include market access for products from the developing countries; a stepping up of official development assistance; a reduction in the external debt of developing countries and its cancellation for the least developed countries; the promotion of foreign direct investment for countries of the South; and contributions to the Global Fund to combat major pandemics.

The real threats of marginalization and poverty resulting from the galloping pace of globalization that face so many peoples of the South must further prompt the various elements of the international community — in particular the developed countries — immediately to act to realize a global partnership leading to development that benefits all and that will allow us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Resolution 57/270 B, to which I referred earlier, has prepared the ground for a major event — a summit, to be held in 2005, to take stock of the implementation of commitments to achieve the Development Goals. The Group of 77, which spared no effort to achieve the adoption of that resolution, fervently hopes that the prospect of that global summit will provide an opportunity for all of us once again to give the issue of development top priority on the agenda of the United Nations. As everyone is aware, security questions are global and necessarily include the fight against poverty and destitution. Only hope for a better future can lead to greater stability and security for all.

We must take advantage of this debate to follow up on that resolution, decide on the modalities for the summit and begin preparations for its success. The summit, as provided for by the resolution, should be held within the framework of the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcome of the major conferences and summits of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, including the Millennium Declaration.

We believe that such a major event will provide a genuine opportunity to consider the implementation of commitments undertaken by Member States, both developed and developing, and to assess the progress made towards the achievement of the development goals agreed at the international level, including those set out in the Millennium Declaration. That meeting will also enable the international community to reflect on the best ways and means to move forward the implementation process.

Another question that is provided for in resolution 57/270 B deals with the assessment of follow-up mechanisms of the International Conference on Financing for Development. That resolution provides for an assessment during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the Monterrey Consensus follow-up mechanisms, namely the high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and with the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Assembly high-level dialogue on financing for development. The Group of 77 will be ready to begin that assessment immediately following the high-level dialogue on financing for development, set for 29 and 30 October.

Mr. Balarezo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, and my own country, Peru.

The Rio Group has decided to speak in this meeting of the General Assembly, in which we are discussing resolution 57/270B, adopted in June 2003, to reaffirm our firm commitment to fulfilling that resolution's objectives and to stress the importance of its full implementation.

We believe that the negotiating process that guided us to the resolution reflected the concern of us all that the progress made is not sufficient and that greater political impetus is therefore required to ensure the complete and effective fulfilment of the commitments we undertook in the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

Those conferences and summits, each with its own thematic unity, offered us an institutional, programmatic and conceptual framework for tackling

what we consider to be the major challenges to humanity: eradicating poverty and improving the living standards of the world's entire population. Nevertheless, the need for coordination among the various follow-up mechanisms and for determining the different roles of the various actors involved alerts us to the urgency of preparing a comprehensive framework giving coherence to the follow-up processes.

To tackle that challenge, we recognize, above all, that everyone must be involved in attaining those commitments. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate and integrate the work of all actors involved in this process, such as States, the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, civil society and the private sector.

In this regard, the Rio Group takes note of the proposal of the President of the Economic and Social Council to strengthen the role of the Council, which is acting on the requests for it to make its coordination activities more effective, in particular with respect to the work of the Commissions, the impact of the activities of the United Nations funds and programmes, and the Council's relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. The Rio Group believes the proposal by the President of the Economic and Social Council is a valuable contribution deserving the study and discussion of Member States.

We emphasize the need to examine periodically the progress made towards achieving the agreed goals of the major United Nations conferences and summits. Such a review should respect the follow-up processes of each conference at all levels — national, regional, international and system-wide — and identify the obstacles that arise in the course of implementing decisions. Reviewing each follow-up process will also enable us to find the best ways to update their working methods and to enhance the synergies generated among the follow-up processes, with a view to achieving better results.

The Rio Group would like to stress the importance we attach to such a periodic review, which would provide us with an assessment of progress made, maintain the momentum necessary to consolidate that progress and enable us to design a set of measures for overcoming any obstacles encountered. In that regard, we support holding a summit in 2005 to assess

comprehensively the progress made. It should coincide with a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including goal 8: building a global partnership for development.

We also agree that we must determine the roles of and coordination among the various organisms and agencies of the United Nations system in the follow-up mechanisms for decisions adopted in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken at all levels and to strengthen the role of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we will continue this work in this session of the General Assembly when we consider the indicative programme of work of the Second Committee and when we evaluate the follow-up mechanisms established at the Monterrey Conference in accordance with Chapter III of the Monterrey Consensus. The Rio Group notes the suitability of continuing to explore ways and means of improving the work of the Second and Third Committees. The Rio Group will participate energetically in that work, which is part of the framework of the reform process under way at the United Nations and which aims to improve its action and effectiveness.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway align themselves with this statement.

The European Union supports a strong and efficient United Nations system and is ready to contribute actively to the goal of building an international order based on effective multilateral institutions within the fundamental framework of the United Nations Charter.

The principal goal of the years ahead will be the effective implementation of the commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits of the last ten years, including the Millennium Declaration, which for the European Union represents the overarching policy framework for United Nations economic and social work. The United Nations must play a central role in maintaining the political momentum established through the major conferences

and in ensuring a more integrated and coordinate implementation of their targets and commitments.

The positive outcome of the ad hoc working group of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields culminated in the approval of resolution 57/270B. Its success is capitalizing on the momentum originating in the United Nations conferences and summits of the last decade has given fresh impetus to the work carried out by United Nations bodies. At this point, we have established a clear direction and a working programme that calls on the entire membership to make progress on these issues.

At the end of this month, the General Assembly will hold its first High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The European Union is committed to ensuring the successful outcome of that event. It will allow us to make an assessment of the follow-up to the mechanisms established in the Monterrey Consensus. The Monterrey Consensus has been successful because it is based on an innovative partnership among the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Those organizations have demonstrated a great commitment to implementing the Monterrey Consensus and have shown that it is possible to work together, within their respective mandates, to achieve a common objective.

What we have witnessed is just the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy in the international community's cohesive and effective action to implement a common agenda for the financing of development. We believe that there is room to improve this relationship further through the development and strengthening, in all the organizations involved, of a sense of ownership of the follow-up mechanisms of the Monterrey Consensus. We should continue to involve the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO in our discussions intended to determine the best ways to ensure that the follow-up mechanisms reflect the spirit of Monterrey and correspond to our common final objectives.

As far as the Second Committee is concerned, we are convinced that in order to maximize the policy relevance and the impact of the Committee's deliberations, we need to address the way it works. In particular, we are bound, according to resolution

57/270 B, to consider the Second Committee programme set forth in the annex to the resolution and take a decision thereon by December 2003. The European Union has already put forward its vision on how it feels the work should be reorganized. We approach this debate with an open mind but with the clear objective of strengthening the role of the United Nations.

General Assembly resolution 57/270 B also indicated the need to strengthen United Nations cohesiveness by fostering stronger interaction and coordination between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council through a process of greater consultation between the Presidents and the Bureaus of the Assembly and the Council. Furthermore, we need to ensure that the work of the General Assembly and its Second and Third Committees be more focused, coherent, visible and politically relevant to the implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. In order to achieve this, we need to look at the interaction between the different Committees, guided by political vision.

The broad consensus on the pivotal role of the Economic and Social Council in system-wide coordination and in promoting integrated, coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits has been emphasized in the light of the policy guidance emanating from the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At its session last July, the Economic and Social Council decided to finalize the list of cross-referenced thematic issues and the multi-year work programme before its next substantive session, in 2004.

In its deliberations, the General Assembly has also invited the functional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council to contribute actively to the assessment of cross-sectoral thematic issues. The various commissions have been asked to review their work methods, and we have great expectations for the results. The new path being taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, shows how innovation can lead to more targeted, productive work that keeps the United Nations in the focus of the initiatives and attention of Governments, civil society and other stakeholders. In this respect we believe that the functional commissions should look at resolution 57/270 B with a different

timetable. According to the report of the Secretary-General, it will take at least two years before we can have an understanding of what has been done. We believe that once there is consensus on proceeding in a certain direction, decisions have to be implemented rapidly and efficiently.

Achieving the Millennium Declaration Goals and the objectives of the other major United Nations conferences and summits will take sustained political attention, a strong sense of commitment and unwavering dedication at both the national and international levels. The European Union believes that the major event of 2005 will strengthen our common will to focus on implementation based on a comprehensive review of the progress achieved. As we have already indicated, we look to the Secretary-General to make further proposals to the Assembly next year on the structure of such an event. At the same time, we believe that the Secretariat should begin preparations, in order to provide the membership with a comprehensive evaluation on what has been achieved in terms of the results of the commitments undertaken by the international community in implementing the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Mr. Qamar (Pakistan): It is with great pleasure that I address this august forum on the important subject of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

At the outset, I wish to align our delegation with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Pakistan's delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on integrated and coordinated conference follow-up. We call for its immediate and full implementation.

Over the years, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have played an important role by contributing to the evolution of the global economic and social normative framework that emerged from the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s. It is now time to move from policy to implementation. To that end, we are happy that the focus of the decisions contained in resolution 57/270 B is on implementation.

We are pleased to note that the Economic and Social Council has been given the primary responsibility to act as the central forum for system-wide coordination and annual review and assessment of progress in the implementation of conference outcomes. Pakistan's delegation looks forward to participating in discussions to develop a multi-year work programme for the coordination segment of the Council, taking into account the thematic issues common to the conference outcomes as well as proposals by Member States. We believe that for the optimal results, the substantive review process must be carried out by the functional commissions. The work of the functional commissions should be analytical and must highlight key coordination issues relating to the theme of the coordination segment. As it is, the theme of the future high-level segment would be related to the theme of the coordination segment, which augers well for greater synergy and effective follow-up.

The monitoring of the implementation of the commitments should be across the board and based on indicators agreed upon through an intergovernmental process. While on this subject, may I emphasize the need to make the mechanisms for reporting by national Governments simplified and harmonized.

Of particular satisfaction to us is the emphasis placed by the General Assembly on the need for regular review of the progress made in the implementation of commitments undertaken in major United Nations conferences. The Assembly has also stressed the need for indicators to assess progress made in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the Goal concerning a global partnership for development.

In addition, we welcome the decision to hold a major United Nations event in 2005 aimed at a comprehensive review of progress achieved in implementing all commitments made in the Millennium Declaration. We fully endorse the points stressed by the representative of Morocco, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, that such a review should be undertaken in a balanced manner in terms of the respective commitments of developed and developing countries. Indeed, a 2005 summit would be a welcome opportunity to undertake a global review of implementation of conference outcomes, including that of the Millennium Summit. We trust that the presidency of the General Assembly will initiate the preparatory process at an early date to ensure the

success of such a summit. We look forward to participating in deliberations on this important subject.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I should like to express our support for the statement made earlier by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Since the 1990s, the United Nations has held a series of major conferences and summits in the development field — such as the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development — with the aim of strengthening international development cooperation and achieving sustainable development and general social progress in all countries, particularly the developing countries. Those summits and conferences set out goals and targets for international development cooperation. Finding ways to integrate and coordinate implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits is essential in attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

We welcomed the fact that last year, the United Nations took an important step forward in its efforts to integrate and coordinate follow-up actions by forming an Ad Hoc Working Group within the General Assembly. In June this year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/270 B, on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, which established specific goals and focuses and which defined roles for the United Nations and related institutions. That marked a good starting point for comprehensive and balanced implementation of the outcomes of the relevant conferences and summits. In that context, we have taken note of the report submitted by the Secretary-General (A/58/359) on implementation of resolution 57/270 B. We appreciate the useful suggestions put forward by the Secretary-General.

I wish to make the following points on how to implement the resolution on follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

First, being action-oriented and placing priority on implementation are essential for integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Development — particularly of developing countries — has been the common theme of all the major United Nations conferences and summits. At the same time, underdevelopment is the major obstacle to developing countries' efforts to implement those outcomes. The United Nations should commit itself to the development goals, principles and consensuses established by those conferences and summits; fundamentally change the trend towards making peace primary and development secondary; attach equal importance to promoting development and maintaining peace; establish a development culture; strengthen development agencies; and ensure development resources. To that end, we believe that the United Nations, in formulating cross-sectoral themes, should take fully into account the concerns of developing countries — such as financial assistance, technology transfer, capacity-building, market access and poverty eradication — so that development goals can be effectively addressed and attained in a comprehensive, concerted and balanced way.

Secondly, strengthening coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and relevant agencies and promoting the coherence and coordination of international development policies will guarantee implementation of the resolution. In implementing international development goals and targets, the United Nations and other development institutions — such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the relevant funds and programmes — all have important but different roles to play. The United Nations and those institutions need to strengthen the coherence and coordination of their policies to better link development policies and projects and to enhance the coherence and coordination of international development policies. We thus appreciate the regular dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council.

Thirdly, more comprehensive reform of the Economic and Social Council will lay the foundation for more meaningful development cooperation. In order to better integrate and coordinate United Nations efforts in that regard, resolution 57/207 B has provided the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their functional bodies with a number of reform measures, such as reviewing follow-up mechanisms for development financing, streamlining the Second Committee's agenda, holding joint

meetings of the Second and Third Committees and improving the functional commissions' working methods. Reform leads to efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

We welcome and support the proposals concerning United Nations reform in the economic and social fields. Here, I wish to emphasize two points. First, reform of the Second Committee and reform in the economic and social fields are integral parts of the entire United Nations reform process. Coordinated and comprehensive consideration should be given to various reform measures in their entirety. Secondly, the ultimate goal of reform is strengthening, not weakening, the economic development function of the United Nations; strengthening governmental responsibility rather than replacing it with partnership; expanding, not diminishing, the right of developing countries to participate in decision-making; and enabling civil society to join in international cooperation according to relevant rules of procedure, rather than without rules to follow.

Finally, we support the provision of resolution 57/270 B that automatic five-year and 10-year review mechanisms for a number of major United Nations conferences and summits are to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. We also support the United Nations holding a major event in 2005 to comprehensively review integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major conferences and summits. I should like to reiterate that, as 2005 — a major year for the United Nations — will also see a review of the Millennium Summit and a high-level dialogue on financing for development, the United Nations should conduct consultations at an early date to determine the level, form, focus and interrelations of those high-level meetings.

We are prepared to continue to strengthen our cooperation and consultations with various parties in a joint effort for successful, integrated and coordinated United Nations follow-up actions.

Mr. Mustapha (Malaysia): My delegation welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to include consideration of this item in the agenda of the current session.

Most conferences and summits are prompted by a desire to discuss important issues of common interest and to explore solutions to problems. We attach great importance to the implementation of the decisions and

goals of all United Nations conferences and summits. It is imperative that effective monitoring mechanisms be established to ensure that conferences and summits achieve their desired goals and objectives.

In this connection, we thank the Secretary-General for his report to the General Assembly. It has assisted us in identifying the core elements of the framework that are essential for integrating follow-up processes, as projected in resolution 57/270 B, adopted by this body four months ago. The report also highlights issues that require our immediate attention. For its part, the Economic and Social Council, through its coordination segment, focused on its role in this regard at its 2003 substantive session, bearing in mind its crucial task to promote the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

The question of the core elements of the framework that are essential for integrating follow-up processes with respect to implementation was discussed comprehensively during the deliberations leading up to the adoption of resolution 57/270 B, as well as during discussions held during the 2003 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. My delegation intends, therefore, to touch on the issues relating to implementation actions highlighted in the report.

The Secretary-General has identified three kinds of implementation actions: first, ongoing activities that need to be strengthened; secondly, decisions to be adopted in implementing specific provisions of the resolution; and, thirdly, the question of future reviews. On the strengthening of ongoing activities, resolution 57/270 B has emphasized that a stronger link should be established between policy guidance and operational activities. We concur with the observation that the governing body has the responsibility to ensure that relevant policy decisions are integrated into the programme of work of the respective organizations.

In this regard, the respective Executive Boards of the relevant agencies, funds and programmes should undertake a more concerted effort to ensure greater coherence in the activities undertaken by them, in the furtherance of the objectives of their various programmes, culminating ultimately in the implementation of outcomes of conferences and summits in an integrated and coordinated manner. We are also in agreement with the assertion made by the General Assembly that system-wide interagency

coordination and cooperation to implement the outcomes of major conferences and summits should be further promoted through the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination and the United Nations Development Group.

It is clear to my delegation that the bulk of the follow-up activities would necessarily have to be carried out by the Economic and Social Council through its various functional commissions. These are the bodies that have been entrusted, and even at times specifically mandated, with the primary responsibility for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits. In this regard, the Economic and Social Council has the responsibility to ensure that its functional commissions work in a coordinated manner, especially when deciding on thematic issues to be considered by its various organs. In this regard, my delegation commends the Economic and Social Council for having begun, even prior to the adoption of resolution 57/270 B, to have joint Bureau meetings between its various functional commissions and between the functional commissions and the Council itself. Such meetings would prove invaluable in allowing the relevant chairpersons to discuss their multi-year programmes of work, in particular when deliberating thematic issues for a new term. As a member of the Economic and Social Council, my delegation reiterates its full support and commitment to work with other members to ensure success in our endeavours.

Through resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly had also requested the Economic and Social Council to establish a multi-year work programme for its coordination segment no later than 2004. The Bureau of the Economic and Social Council is to initiate consultations by January 2004, with the aim of reaching a decision before the start of its substantive session in the same year. However, as most of the functional commissions of ECOSOC had already adopted their multi-year programmes of work well in advance of the adoption of resolution 57/270 B, we are of the view that the Economic and Social Council could begin to play its role in this regard by considering a thematic issue that would involve the widest cross-section of the work of its various organs insofar as it is possible. The Economic and Social Council should continue with the consideration of such

thematic issues until its functional commissions have exhausted their current multi-year programmes of work. At such time, the multi-year programmes of work of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions could be streamlined so that they would consider particular cross-sectoral thematic issues common to each organ.

Having said this, my delegation would like to stress that such consideration of common cross-sectoral issues should be done in a fair and balanced manner, bearing in mind the tendency to overlook the consideration of social issues, alternatively referred to as soft issues, when juxtaposed with those with an economic or developmental aspect. We must remember that in developing countries, in particular, limited economic development will lead to a situation where social policies could not be effectively carried out, thus preventing the fulfilment of goals set out in the various outcome documents of United Nations summits and conferences. As such, one should not overlook the importance of coherence and the integration of social and economic imperatives.

My delegation reiterates its commitment to fulfil all obligations undertaken at various United Nations summits and conferences, and pledges its full support to both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and through the Council, its various functional commissions, in the furtherance and achievement of all goals of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Mr. Chave (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland took an active part in the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Working Group on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields.

Despite the important work achieved by the Group, it is our opinion that the emphasis placed on the Millennium Development Goals as a reference point for such a coordinated follow-up has fallen short of the expectations expressed at the Millennium Declaration's adoption. Moreover, despite Switzerland's conviction that a coordinated follow-up must cover all the major conferences, it is becoming evident that the issues addressed by these conferences have yet to be integrated in a concrete way in either policies or institutions.

Nevertheless, Switzerland is satisfied with the decisions taken concerning the working methods of the Economic and Social Council and the improvement in the functioning of its subsidiary organs, including the functional commissions, as well as with the suggestions regarding the General Assembly, particularly its Second and Third Committees. Each body is responsible for improving its own effectiveness and better coordinating its work, with a view to fully realizing the action plans elaborated at the major conferences and the Millennium Goals.

To accomplish this, we deem the following points to be of particular importance: more flexibility in the multi-year work programmes of the Council and its functional commissions; more efficacious working methods; greater coordination between the agenda of the Council and those of its functional commissions; reorganization and simplification of the Second Committee's agenda; improved coordination among the various offices of the Secretariat; regular reporting by all the functional commissions on the integrated follow-up of major conferences and summits; and improved coordination at all levels and among all actors, including Governments, international organizations — in particular, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization — civil society and the private sector.

On another level, we recognize the soundness of the Working Group's observations on the importance of the resources necessary to implement the recommendations of conferences and summits. However, there are limits to the resources made available through official development assistance for the realization of the Millennium Declaration's commitments. We must come up with new and innovative solutions. In this respect, Switzerland supports the Secretary-General's efforts to make the United Nations accessible to new actors and partners, who can bring with them new capacities and resources.

Without seeing any need to restructure the very foundations of the current multilateral architecture, Switzerland believes that the Monterrey Consensus — more specifically its Chapter III — is a step in the right direction, recognizing the need for collaboration among all the parties concerned in order to achieve the Millennium Goals. In our view, the specific role of the United Nations in the context of the follow-up to Monterrey is to contribute to improved cooperation, transparency and coordination between Governments,

civil society and public and private actors, as well as multilateral institutions. Switzerland feels that specific questions raised in the follow-up to Monterrey should be addressed in the Second Committee, and it looks forward to taking part in its debates over the coming weeks.

Mr. Ayari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Tunisian delegation would first like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and to acknowledge our colleague Abdellah Benmellouk, who presented that statement.

My country welcomes the discussion today on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. At the general debate of the current session, most Member States stressed the importance they attached to giving practical effect to the undertakings given by the international community at the major conferences and summits that marked the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium with a view to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Those conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development gave rise to a great deal of expectation in the international community, in particular among the developing countries, who were hoping at last to see the advent of a stable, fair and united socio-economic order. These events have effectively charted a course for us all to follow to combat poverty, promote development and to ensure that peace, security and justice reign. They also provided the opportunity to define the key parameters and undertake commitments for a global partnership in order to achieve these targets.

Despite these commitments, we must acknowledge that many of the development targets set out in the Millennium Declaration will not be achieved by many countries. Instead, we are seeing an increase in the number of people living in poverty, particularly in Africa, a region where achieving these objectives is the greatest challenge. Therefore, we must pay close attention to the fulfilment of commitments undertaken in the framework of an implementation and follow-up

process that is energetic, systematic and results-based and that avoids duplication and wasted effort.

In this regard, we welcome the fact that the United Nations system is determined to achieve tangible results. The adoption in June 2003 of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields is particularly important because in our opinion it reflects an awareness of the need to stimulate energetic policies to promote implementation of and follow-up to these commitments. In that resolution the Assembly defined the roles that Member States, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, civil society and the private sector would play in implementing these commitments, all within the context of a partnership that requires each party to carry its own weight.

Admittedly, it is the developing countries that bear the primary responsibility for achieving these targets, but it is also clear that, given the interwoven nature of national economies and the world economic system, their efforts require the support of the international community, including the assistance of their developed partners, because most of them will not succeed alone. Success for developing countries also depends on establishing an international economic climate that is favourable to them.

The role of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in implementing the outcomes of the conferences was broadly emphasized by the General Assembly in the aforementioned resolution, which called for a strengthening of their contribution to implementing the outcomes of the conferences and summits. The high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, held on 14 April 2003, was an important milestone in reviewing the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in implementing the Monterrey Consensus. We believe that that meeting will effectively contribute to strengthening the Economic and Social Council's cooperation with the key partners in Washington and Geneva. Furthermore, the high-level dialogue on financing for development, to be held on 29 and 30 October, will enable us to think more in depth about ways and means of translating the commitments undertaken at Monterrey into concrete actions.

With regard to the role of the Economic and Social Council, Tunisia welcomes the emphasis placed on the need to strengthen that pivotal body, which is charged with promoting the coordination and coherence of policies and with the implementation and comprehensive and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of the major international conferences in the economic and social fields. We also attach great importance to the role played by the functional commissions, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, and we call for a strengthening of the Economic and Social Council's relations with the regional commissions. In addition, we call for support for the development frameworks established at the regional level, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Moreover, the Tunisian delegation would like to highlight the need to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems, but that must be accompanied by progress in developing international indicators that will enable us to better assess situations and results of national implementation plans.

The scope of the problems and the complexity of the obstacles that must be overcome by developing countries demand that we be more resolute and devote more resources — at both the national and international levels — to ensuring economic growth and sustained and lasting development for those countries.

Official development assistance, despite efforts to better utilize it, continues to decline. The donor countries must honour their commitments to increase official development assistance to the level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product. Increasing such aid is also important to provide the United Nations system's operational activities with the maximum of success and effectiveness. In that regard, we highlight the role of United Nations funds and programmes — particularly the United Nations Development Programme — in supporting developing countries' efforts, particularly

with a view to eliminating poverty, as well as the need to ensure the financing of those funds and programmes in a more certain and predictable way.

Debt relief should be more significant and more rapid. It is also essential to facilitate and improve access to world markets for developing countries' products, which requires a reduction in agricultural subsidies and the elimination of tariff barriers. It is also a question of facilitating active participation by developing countries in decisions taken by major international organizations — not only the United Nations, but also the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The Tunisian delegation believes that it is of the utmost importance to regularly assess progress achieved in implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. We welcome the inclusion on the agenda of the current General Assembly session of an item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields".

Finally, we should like to stress the importance of organizing a summit in 2005 to review progress in implementing all commitments undertaken in the Millennium Declaration on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General. We believe it is necessary to begin the preparations for that summit as soon as possible.

Implementing commitments undertaken by the international community is the only path that will lead to a better world. Let us work together to meet the challenges of underdevelopment, destitution, disease and malnutrition. Let us do that for the 1.2 billion people painfully surviving on less than one dollar per day, for the 840 million people suffering from hunger and for the 24,000 people — many of whom are children — who die of starvation every day.

The meeting rose at 1 05 p.m.